

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**  
**URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** October 23, 2014

**Meeting No.:** 195

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**Project:** City Arts II

**Phase:** Final

**Location:** Greenmount Avenue and Barclay Street

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**PRESENTATION:**

The presentation by Mr. Charlie Duff (President, Jubilee Baltimore), Ms. Alice Jones (Floura Teeter Landscape Architecture) and Mr. Keval Thakkar (Hord Copland Macht Architects) was in response to the project's July 17<sup>th</sup> Schematic Design presentation of City Arts II Residential Building, the Townhome Components, and the Barkley Street Park. Today's presentation focused on the Park and the Residential Building, not the Townhomes.

Mr. Duff introduced the project to the Panel and summarized the effort since the previous presentation.

The Barkley Street Park:

Ms. Jones presented the Park, identifying the concerns raised in the last presentation and the response to those concerns in the new iteration. They are:

- To study the northern boundary of the park to more effectively define that edge of the park and to separate it from the alleyway while not limiting site lines. Freestanding, cast concrete seat walls set at 18"-24" height were deployed to achieve the desired effect.
- Enhance the park with pedestrian-scale full cut-off fixture set at 12'. It was noted that photometrics are in the process of development.
- Use of an exposed aggregate concrete for pathways through the park. Paving is intended to accommodate scooters and bicycles.
- In addition to the freestanding concrete seat walls, chess tables are set within the concrete path system.
- Three fruiting trees will be replaced with comparable species (apple & peach). Willow Oaks will be placed along the length of the street side of the park using Baltimore City Standards. Swamp White Oaks will be placed within the park. Multi-stem Redbuds will be placed along the length of the park on the interior edge to separate the park from the adjacent townhouses. The extent of the park will be lawn; no shrubs or perennials will be utilized.

Ms. Jones continued to present the landscape elements associated with the City Arts II Building: To mark the entry of City Arts II, Sycamores will flank the entry along the street curb. Other street trees will include Willow Oaks along Greenmount Avenue and Armstrong Red Maples along the south elevation of the building.

### The City Arts II Building:

Mr. Thakkar presented the building, identifying the concerns raised by the panel at the last presentation and his firm's response to those concerns:

- Establish connectivity to the park from City Arts II. Paths on either side of the Townhomes now connect City Arts II with the park (previously a direct but gated connection was established by separating the townhomes into two separate constructs).
- Lessen the perceived weight of the "bridge" crossing the alley (connecting the north wing with the south wing). Aluminum-colored panels at the third level of the bridge are used in contrast to the dark paneling on the lower two levels in an effort to create the perception of lightness.
- The Greenmount façade has been modified so that the north entry faces E. Lafayette Street rather than Greenmount.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PANEL:**

The Panel felt that there were several missed opportunities and new inconsistencies as a result of the design changes since the last presentation.

#### Park:

- Connection from the City Arts II apartment building to the park via the alleyway, as designed, is not an improvement from the former central connection between the townhomes and should have additional study.
- This lack of central connection has left the park with less "identity" and organization – paths seem arbitrary. Greater organization might inform program opportunities, as well. Proposed program elements – chess tables and splash pad – should sit within a concrete area, not the path system or the grass. The park as a whole should address the neighborhood as a priority.
- Free-standing cast-concrete seating does not establish enough edge along the north end of the park. Using topography to inform the north end of the site might increase the sense of enclosure without losing visual security.
- Remove the southern-most Swamp White Oak within the park and add to and extend the productive fruit trees in a quincox form the width of the park.

#### City Arts II Building:

The Panel felt that little change has occurred since the last meeting comments were offered, and that a fundamental concern was not addressed:

- Re-organization of the car access and car-arrival sequence might render significant opportunities for the project. Rather than accessing parking under the proposed "bridge", use the adjacent alley system to access Brentwood Avenue. Create an opening for parking access on that street, rather than a new drive adjacent to the north alley off of Greenmount. This could then reduce the span of the "bridge" over the alleyway.
- The project and associated parking should not be driven by the location of a transformer. Adjusting the east/west bar of the building could result in an entry and pass-through sequence from Greenmount Avenue to the townhouses and potentially to the park that would be significantly more effective than what is shown presently.

- Presently, the bridge that connects the north building with the south building appears to be very heavy, even with the change of material color. Greater study on how to reduce the massing, especially at the top, would be an asset to the project.
- The window placements on both building facades facing Greenmount do not resolve themselves in the order that is suggested by the remainder of the façade. The termination of the northern building along East Lafayette should be resolved in a manner that reflects the setback conditions along the remainder of that street, not be novel to that street. It is to be a greater setback than the balance of the street, then design attention should be given to that space so that it appears purposeful.

**PANEL ACTION:**

The Panel recommends continued development and refinement.

**Attending:**

Charlie Duff- Jubilee Baltimore

Susan Williams – STV

Martha Cross – TRF Development Partners

Rich Villa – Ambit Architecture

Sharon Pula, Keval Thakkar – Hord Coplan Macht

Alice Jones - Floura Teeter

Dr. Meany, Messr. Bowden, Rubin\*, Burns, and Haresign – UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon – Planning Department